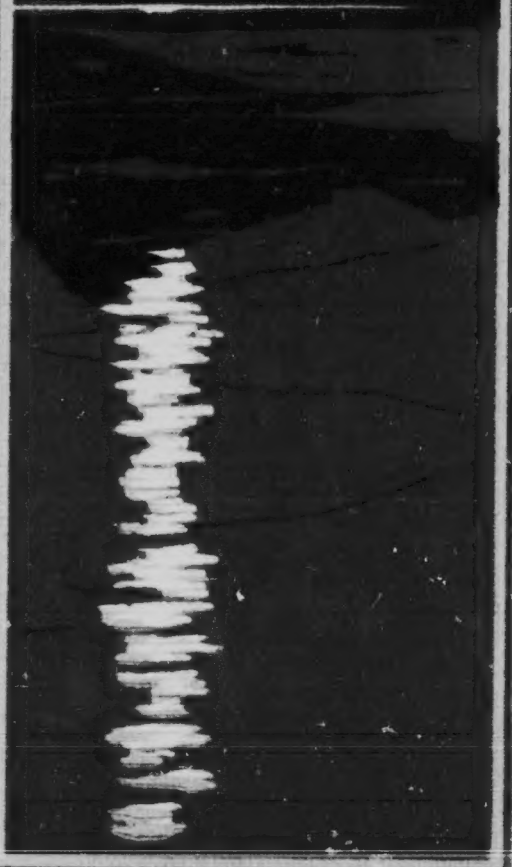
THE SILVER TRAIL

BY

EVELYN GUNNE



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~~Lam. Grimes, Evelyn~~

John A. Cooper Esq.

with the author's compliments

The Silver Trail

Poems by

Evelyn Gunne

Illustrations by Jean Mather

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The Silver Trail

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THE SILVER TRAIL

It dips beyond the mountain,
It lies beyond the lea:—
And where it leads we follow
To learn its mystery.

It shines against the morning
A jewelled thread of light;
It lures, it calls, it beckons
Through all the day and night.

Where leads it? That we know not
Only its silver gleam
Compels us and we follow
The vision and the dream.

No straining eye may sever
The thin ethereal veil,
That at the wide horizon
Enfolds the Silver Trail.

FEALTY

Wide as the Empire, Sire, is our Fealty
  Tendered to thee in thy sea-girt home;
Deep as the ocean's deepest billow;
  High as the heaven's farthest dome.

Naught has abated the love that enwreathed thee
  Years long since with thy Danish bride;
Thine of thine own ere the love bequeathed thee
  Compassed thee 'round when the great Queen died.

Distant and home-lands: Men in the far-lands
  Greet thee most loyally, fervent our prayer;
"God Save King Edward, King of the far-lands:"
  Son of thy Mother, thy sorrow we share.

1901.

AS THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

To the Memory of a Dead Queen who lives forever in the hearts of her people

Out thro' my window, to the night, I launch
  My curtain-shielded, fragile, vision-barque,
And watch the broad, low hills, slow, re-appear
  As sight, accustomed, presses back the dark.

Across the way, a temple roof relieves
  Its dusky penmanship against the sky,
And stained windows, bound in triple sheaves,
  Pour forth their glory on the passer-by.

A mighty chimney flames behind the hill
  A rocket-stream of stars from dusk till day;
Proud constellations spout aloft, and spill
  Into the smoke-wreaths of their milky way.

The village lamps are lit, and friendly lights
  Wink pleasantly across the sparkling snow;
Telling of sheltered homes, these winter nights,
  And cheerful groupings in the firelight's glow.

Low-clashing in the gentle wind, I see,
  In heavy frostiness of pearl galloon,
Each bud and branch, each twig upon the tree
  Lift pallid faces to the winter moon.

A fringe of pines outlines the darkened hills
  With plumed knights, and many a slender lance;
Throughout the air a gentle essence thrills
  Of joust and tourney, and the old romance.

Adown the centuries I see him come,—
  The armored knight, with plume, and golden spur.
I see him stand before his ladye dumb;
  I see the pleading glance he gives to her.

Oh, moonlight silhouette of church and spire!
  Oh, misty laces of the frost-king's gnomes!
Oh, window arabesques of crimson fire!
  Oh, star shine from a hundred, happy homes!

Oh, lovely world! where as in days of old,
  Bright chivalry, still wields her ready lance,
And lusty knight-hood, with its hearts of gold,
  Still keeps alive the light of old romance.

Oh, lovely world! where silver moonbeams fall;
  Where veiléd shadows fringe the paths of light;
Where poised in vastness, that themselves appal,
  Great, golden stars go swinging thro' the night!

To-night, I set the curtains wide, and gaze
  Into the darkness, striving there to see
The old, familiar beauty, thro' the haze
  That hangs between its loveliness, and me.

I hear the distant thunder of the falls
  March musically across the sombre hills;
Or sink to silence in the hidden halls
  Of distant valleys, as the night wind wills.

Its muffled murmur lies beneath all thought,
  As some stern purpose, in a life-loom weft,
May underlie embroideries, day-enwrought,
  Emerging only, as the strands are cleft.

For with the day its tireless thunders cease;
  Obscured by all the busy cark, and care,
But when the gracious night descends in peace,
  Its cadenced music, still, is marching there.

Or in its booming, I can catch the roll
  Of distant war-drums on a distant shore;
Bringing fresh sorrow to the war-sick soul
  Hearing, alway, the unheard cannon's roar.

The wingéd fancy takes its Ariel-flight
  To those far fields, and bivouacs of pain,
Where lie the harvests of the stubborn fight;
  The huddled wounded, and the scattered slain.

With loyalty their steadfast Avatar,
  They marched away our gaily, gallant sons,
Enthusiastic for the game of war,
  And eager for the music of the guns.

There is a moaning in the wind to-night;
  A dirge for those whose disembodied souls
Released, perchance, in some wild Transvaal fight,
  Come, homesick, speeding to their well loved goals.

Oh moon! what sights and sounds ascend to thee!
  As low before thine eyes the world revolves;

Bringing at every wheel some agony
  That rolling onward, changes, and dissolves.

What sights, and sounds, from war's grim battle-fields!
  Where dead and dying greet thy pitying eye
In shapelessness, such as Red Carnage yields
  When bravely fighting, friend, and foeman die.

What boots it all? The lavish overflow
  Of tears, and blood, and treasure manifold;
So oft repeated since the fateful blow
  That cruel wars, and battle-lust foretold.

In that dark hour, when straining up to God
  Incense acceptable to Him arose;
The blood of Abel crying from the sod,
  Presaged a future of potential foes.

Who multiplying in the gliding years
  Would wander o'er the generous, fruitful earth,
O'er-burdened by the heavy doubts, and fears
  That steal from life, her hour of gentle mirth.

Into the world there crept, that evil day,
  Grey Fear, who shivered dully as he ran,
Foreseeing all the wretched, bloody way
  Marked by the footsteps of the murderer, man.

The why we know not, nor the end can see,
  How good from evil still persistent flows
Yet on the wastes of war's wide cruelty
  Courage and chivalry bloom as the rose.

A little wandering in a shady wood;
  A little toiling in the heat and grime;
A misty moment dimly understood,
  Before the fading harbor-lights of time.

Not knowing whose the ship in which we sail,
  Nor to what haven swiftly moving hence,
Nor what uncharted sea, or favoring gale,
  May bring its forfeit, or its recompense.

Could we but know, in this our finite time,
  Or, what far summit of imperial space,
He thunders forth the ukases sublime,
  Who marks the stumblings of our feeble race.

Could we assign to Him some fixed abode;
  Beyond — above, all intervening bars;
Might not our prayers more surely find the road, —
  Not wander impotent among the stars.

The glass is darkened: Draw the blinds between
  The night but y[illegible] e'en so sweet and deep,
Dark clouds have [illegible]otted out the moonlight's sheen,
  And half a world away, dead heroes sleep.

A new year dawns; A new king mounts the throne
  And wields the sceptre, in the place and stead
Of her, who had so long and closely grown
  Into our lives, we scarce believed her dead.

As little children, in the long ago,
  We thought of her as of the earth and sky
Unchangeable. Nor could be brought to know
  That she, like lesser mortals, too, must die.

Our grandsires told how they for her had fought,
  Into her realm our fathers had been born;
We could not dream a time when she was not,
  And flouted such a time, with childish scorn.

The sombre churches, draped in sable weeds;
  The mournful prayers that pass like heavy sighs,
The hushed rememberings of noble deeds,
  All speak of her: "Victoria, The Wise."

The pomp and splendor curving from the sea;
  The booming guns; the stately measured tread;
The tolling bells; the solemn minstrelsy
  Proclaim the Queen, our Great Beloved is dead.

The cenotaph mete for so great a queen,
  Will be an empire, wrought from many a race;
Co-hering by the influence unseen
  Of her whose memory claims, so large a place.

And as the son takes up the heavy task,
  In these dark days, when death seems lord of all:
No prouder service do Canadians ask
  Than for that empire's sake, to stand or fall.

The great sub-nations come as children do,
  To tender service in the time of need, —
Exulting in the strength to carve, and hew
  Their path to glory by the knightly deed.

The elder brother's part is ours to claim,
  With head erect, and nostril's breathing pride,
We stand defiant through all praise and blame,
  Defiant, by the wounded mother's side.

But calling trumpets, and the battle blade:
  The mustering troops to war-like honors led;
Heal not the wound the infant year has made, —
  We mourn unchecked, our gentle, mighty dead.

Day follows day, as Time with scythe a-swing
  Gathers his sheaves, into the mighty past:
A day to weep; a day to softly sing, —
  Then sleep — a dreamless sleep, for all at last.

And death still stalks, as mightily, and grim,
  As when he, swift, to Herculaneum came
But lo, the horror of that day grows dim
  As hapless Martinique, bursts forth in flame.

For not content with man destroying man,
  The Force, that lies inert, from age to age,
Upreared its angry head and over-ran
  The blinded city, in its senseless rage.

On high and lowly, man, and laughing maid:
  On quiet households and the busy mart,

The Red Death fell, in grandeur, full arrayed,
And stilled, with majesty, each trembling heart.

The Southern sky will smile again in peace,
And little wavelets dance along the shore;
Seed-time and harvest, cycling, shall not cease,
But these affrighted ones shall wake no more.

The war is ended; Song and bells a-chime
Peal out the joyous news from tower and fane:
The message tell, in prose and pleasant rhyme,
The grisly cacodemon, war, is slain.

The war is ended; clearly through the glass
I see the moonlight fall on church and spire.
The war is ended, and the pain will pass
And leave but holy deeds, baptized in fire.

The war is ended; softly thro' the night
The summer zephyrs breathe it on the air,
Peace, Peace is in the land; Peace, angel-bright
Folds her soft wings and thrills with happy prayer.

The war is ended; Like a palace floor
The shim'ring lake lies 'neath the smiling skies.
And virgin water-lilies by the shore
Breathe only "Peace," in perfumed ecstasies.

A night-bird cries from out the darkened pines
A mother-note of love, most passing sweet.

There, where the wood such blessedness enshrines,
Peace wandereth, with milk-white, naked feet.

Oh Queen, beloved! Perchance in some, bright star,
The echoes of our joy may wander near,
And pierce thy sweet serenity afar
With dreams of days, when thou wert with us, here.

God grant thee fair repose; but if indued
With prescience deep, of how thy people fare;
Thy noble heart must thrill with gratitude,
To know us freed, at last, from battle-care

The war is ended; sturdy friend and foe,
Have proved their worth on unforgotten fields,
And while we praise the victor, well we know,
The pride and valor of the foe that yields.

The war is ended; may the days to come
Be happy days with peace on every hand,
Till time shall make our crying sorrows dumb
And green the graves that scar a conquered land.

The war is ended; proud, — in regal state,
The jewelled cities, wide, their banners fling;
While sea-ward far, the heaving ships await
The stately crowning of their lord and king.

Written during the Boer War.

THE SONG OF THE SONS

Hear the Sons: the stalwart Sons! Hear the
chorus of the Sons!
Hear the Men of Empire shouting from afar!
"Lo, a dream of rosy years
In reality appears,
And the Voice of Fealty is its Avatar.'

Hear the North, the gallant North! Hear the
singing of the North!
In the waves of destiny that lap the shore;
"Hail, the men of brawn and brains!
Hail, the Riders of the Plains!
Hear Strathcona's men come marching to the
fore."

Hear the Sons, the sturdy Sons! for the honor
of the Sons!
Hear the deep exultant chaunting on the breeze!
"For the sealing of the Word
Which we, listening, have heard,
We would drain our country's chalice to the
lees."

Hear the South, the golden South! for the honor
of the South!
Hear the men of Australasia in the line:
"We've a debt of love to pay
For the dead long passed away,
And with living men we write our countersign."

Hear the Sons, the Southern Sons! hear the sing-
ing of the Sons!
On the winds that hold their battle flags un-
furled:

"We are many, we are one,
We are all, or we are none
In our singing with the Sons around the world."

Hear the East, the splendid East! for the honor
of the East!
Hear the murmur floating o'er the Southern Sea;
"For the Shaping from the Haze;
For the Safety of the Ways,
Take our swords that other peoples may be free."

Hear the Sons, the dark-eyed Sons! Hear the
chorus of the Sons!
"We were children, little children, long ago,
When you guarded well, the gates
Of a hundred troubled states;
Now as men we come to pay the debt we owe."

Hear the Cape, the loyal Cape! for the honor of
the Cape!
Hear the wild huzzas that welcome over-seas;
Stranger-brothers, strange no more
Since the greeting on the shore
Claims the tired soldier straight-way, one with
these.

Hear the Sons, the noble Sons! Hear the chant-
ing of the Sons!
"For the love we bear the land from whence we
come,
We will render gasp and moan;
We will pay in blood and bone —
Pay the Price, beside the gallant men from
Home."

Hear the Field, the stricken Field! for the honor
of the Field!
Hear the warning to the tribes that lie beyond:
"Where was sown the treacherous seed
There the flapping vultures feed
On the harvest of a traitor's broken bond."

Hear the Sons, the stalwart Sons! Hear the
singing of the Sons!
Hear the Men of Empire shouting from afar:
"Lo, a dream of rosy years
In reality appears,
And the Voice of Fealty is its Avatar."

INVITATION

Come from your sewered cities;
  Come from your tainted towns;
Come where the winds are telling
  Tales to the laughing downs.

Step from the cruel treadmill;
  Banish the stress and strife.
Hark to the haunting, calling
  Voice of the joy of life.

Come, where is kept the freshness
  Still of primeval dawn.
Come, where the woodland waters
  Image the thirsting fawn.

Drink of the wine of summer,
  Spiced with a million flowers,—
Cooled by the mountain breezes,
  Dashed with the silver showers.

Come thou, and hear the rain bird's
  Mystical, mournful cry,
Witness at eve the glory
  Of God in the western sky.

Sleep with the vibrant star-shine
  Pulsing above your head
Lapped in the lovely silence
  Lulling the happy dead.

THE NORTH

North, North, North, oh, the gorgeous North!
Keen as sword blade steel,
Sound and sweet as the virgin day
On which God set his seal.

Good, fine smell of the pleasant earth
Borne from moveless seas;
Marshy whiffs from the reed-bird's haunts, —
Clean, up-holding breeze.

Glorious dower of boundless plain!
Youth, eternal youth:
Lonely spaces, and wind-swept stars,
Beautiful as truth.

North, North, North, oh, my gorgeous North!
Tender, strong and true.
Alien bred nor alien born
Can grasp our love for you.

THE ARROW LAKES

The Arrow lakes were the lakes we sailed
    The length of a summer day,
With the tang of the distant forest fires,
And the soft, pale smoke of their fierce desires,
    Haunting us all the way.

Oh! the sea-green water along the shore,
    Coaxing the tumbling rills,
Rippling far in their sweet unrest,
Like a tangle of jewels across the breast,
    Of the wanton, painted hills.

Oh, the songs of the mermaids far below
    Were floating on every breeze!
Entranced we watched for their golden hair,
And glimpsed their faces surpassing fair,
    Cleave the enchanted seas!

THE HARVEST STORM

Hear the legions of the rain
Slowly trampling o'er the plain!
See the misty, swaying curtain,
Waving, silvery, uncertain,
Trailing slantingly across the grassy glade!
Drenching with its faint of faery,
Thirsty upland, bluff and prairie:
Web of gossamer betwixt the sun and shade.

Hear the steady, roaring beat
Of the rain's advancing feet!
See the sun's storm-reddened taper
Vanish in the folding vapor
Hear the wildwood slowly stirring with unrest!
Watch the wild things helter-skelter
Seek the warm earth's certain shelter;
Hark! the foliage-hidden bird within its nest.

It is coming! Listen! Listen!
Giant teardrops fall and glisten
On the cheeks of crimson roses
That the herald wind discloses;
There's a menace and a sighing everywhere.
Feel the deep breath slowly taken,
While the world is still unshaken,
By the mandates of the powers of the air!

Grim is the light over valley and mountain,
Death and disaster, foretold in its glow.
While the dark clouds, in their thunderous fountain,
Shake with the weight of their message of woe.

Snap! There's a star on the window-pane raying,
And "The wheat, Oh the wheat," in a long broken cry;
For the wheat, — the gold wheat — the settler is praying,
And bitter as death is the wrath of the sky.

On the drums of the thunder, the Hail-king is beating,
And tossing his shot and shell, earth-ward in glee:
"Smite little Brother" the drums keep repeating:
"Smite yet again, ere we hurry and flee."

Sullenly mutt'ring, and sobbing, and sighing,
Far in the distance the tumult is dying.
Thunderously shaken the spent clouds are slipping
Over the edge of the world a-dripping.

There's a flutter, and a glitter,
In the treetops, and a twitter
From a small stout-hearted singer,
Of the sun the first joy-bringer,
Chirping cheerily: "The storm, the storm is o'er"
Flirts his tail, and shakes his feathers,
In defiance of all weathers,
That may hail or thunder, bluster, blow or pour!

But where ruined fields are lying
In their stricken beauty dying,
There the blanched face of the settler cold, and grim,
With its look of tragic durance,
Gives to all the world assurance,
That one bitter cup is running o'er the brim.

THE PATH OF THE MOON

To Mrs. J. J——

Bride of the water; child of the moon;
  Silvery, shining, far;
Leading straight to the land of dreams,
  Over the azure bar.

Into its glorious path of light
  Glide with your paddle free;—
Lave your soul in the loveliest
  Vision that mortals see.

Steer for the gates, and towers of Spain;
  Mayhap, they'll let us through
Into that realm of enchantment fair,
  Where the dreams of men come true.

THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

With a mighty roar, from plain and hill,
  The King of the Iron Trail,
Swings into sight, and the stations thrill,
  With the singing wheel, and rail.

By day and day, from the Eastern slips,
  The immigrant trains go by,
Bringing men, and maids, from the deep-sea
    ships;
  And home, a far, far cry.

From East and West, in an endless flow
  On this long, narrow street;
The sons of men pass to and fro,
  And East and West, here meet.

Afar they go, with their loads of corn,
  Where the silver ribbons lie,
To the Port where the Lord of Day is born,
  And the Port that sees him die.

Thy builders wrought as the gods of old,
  With human life and pain.
They levelled the mountains, lit with gold,
  To make thy pathway plain.

The stately ships afar, and afar,
  Plough tho' the chaunting sea,
By sun, and moon, and the great North Star
  To furnish food for thee.

Thy levies are laid on the Orient,
  From China to Hindustan;

With treasure trove from the desert tent,
  Or the palaces of Japan.

Magician and sorcerer of the West!
  Thou hast sown the magic seed
That blossoms in cities newly drest,
  To meet a nation's need.

The need that forever beckons on:
  Need of the Giver, and Gift:
Need of the sons from the turgid dawn
  Where the mists of morning lift.

Instant need of a distant goal
  For the garnered sheaf, and shock;
Wealth that ever must onward roll
  To its hungry, ocean dock.

Tiny builders wrought as the gods of old,
  With human life and pain;
They levelled the mountains, tipped with gold,
  And made thy pathway plain.

THE MARCH OF THE NORTHERN MEN

SONG

Britain called them; sons ever must obey;
  Britain called them; lo, they are up and away!
Up, and away, to the veldt-land; jungle, and
    marsh, and fen;
  Ever we hear an echo: the march of the
    Northern Men.

(Chorus.)

See them marching, list, to the drum-beats fall!
  Hear the far off echoing bugles call!
See them march thro' jungle, and marsh and fen!
  God of Battles, hear! for our Northern Men.

Laughing lads, delighted the summon[illegible]rd;
  Sterner manhood, thrilled at the magic w[illegible]
"Come, thou, and stand beside me, nay, it is [illegible]
    of need,
  But that the nations may truly, see ye are sons
    indeed."

Every word of battle beneath the sea,
  Binds us closer, Mother of Lands, to thee,
For of our own we've given; cities and Western
    plains
  Shout: "We are linked forever; bound with a
    thousand chains."

Wide seas sever; hand may not join with hand,
  But our hearts are far in a foreign land;
Mother, whose heart is broken by sorrows be-
    yond our ken,
  Hold we your hands in silence, and pray for
    our own brave men.

WHEAT FIELDS

A far, far stretch of prairie;
  A wind, perfumed with flowers;
A meadow-lark, soft singing,
  Through all the morning hours.

And spread, from east to westward:
  Far as the eyes behold,
Beneath the blue, blue heavens
  Lie fields of burnished gold.

WINNIPEG

A strong young city folded in the crease
  That halves a continent from sea to sea,
And girt about with fair, far-lying fields,
  The golden largesse for futurity.

THE BLIZZARD

Out of the mystical North came the wind,
  Terrible, savage and grim.
Hounding before him the terrified snow,—
  Crazed, when the trail grew dim.

Over the mountains, the fleet snow ran;
  Crouching in valleys to rest,
Ever the merciless wind dogged her down,
  Spying from crevice and crest.

Through the wild night-time he raged in his wrath,
  Beating the way-farer blind;
Spread like a pestilence over the land;
  Scattering death behind.

Wild in her terror the spent snow fell,
  Fell, and the wind was gone.
White as the dead, and as still she lay
  When came the glimmering dawn.

MY HOSTELRY

Blue sky for the roof of my banquet hall,
(Shall I not boast?)
And daisies pied where my feet shall fall,
With the four great winds for my castle wal
And God for my Host.

SONG OF THE SELF BINDER

Click-click, click-click, click-click!
Humming, whirring, humming!
Click-click, click-click, click-click!
I am coming, coming, coming!

My armor bright is flashing!
My sword is true and tried.
Oh swaying pride of summer,
I come, my bride, my bride!

The dallying days have loitered
Since first the breath of spring,
In soft prophetic whispers
Foretold this wondrous thing.

But now I hear the black-birds
Begin with swelling throats,
Their lusty, harvest anthem,
In strident, raucous notes.

Click-click, click-click, click-click!
Humming, whirring, humming!
Click-click, click-click, click-click!
I am coming, coming, coming!

The tinkling bells of cattle
  Make music o'er the wheat,
From where in lush, green marshes
  The herds drowse in the heat.

My humming, whirring, humming!
  Proclaim, oh, golden sheaves!
I am coming, coming, coming!
  In the haze the Northland weaves.

I come, I come, my trembling,
  And golden-crownéd bride!
With men-at-arms all ready
  To rally to your side.

Oh hasten, slaves, my chariot!
  Lash hard my chargers three.
My love is held in durance.
  And I come to set her free!

The day — the hour — the triumph!
  Right joyously I sing:
"Oh Heart of Gold, I'm coming,
  A Norseman, and a King!"

THE LAKE OF THE WOODS

Lake of the water-lilies!
  Lake of the thousand wiles!
Lake of the shade of heaven
  Answering smiles with smiles.

Sprinkled with jade-like gems
  The jewels an angel flung
Far, from his out-stretched hands
  When this wheeling world was young.

Smiling, the angel whispered:
  "Look to the blue on high;
Never look down to darkness
  Mirror the laughing sky."

So, in the rosy dawning,
  Greeting his gracious smile,
And fanned by his gleaming pinions,
  Dimples the lake, the while.

Gazing afar the guardian
  Sees in the mirror's face
The flocks of heaven, gently
  Rocked in the wind's embrace.

And oft in the summer twilight,
  A cloud like a white canoe
Floats over the forest isles,
  And an angel is all the crew.

Guided by shadowy hands
  The white boat sails away,
Cleaving the perfumed dusk
  From close to the break of day.

Its cargo of balmy airs,
  And dews from the midnight sky,
Scattered far and wide
  As the buoyant craft sails by.

Blessing with bounteous fingers
  Zephyr, and drop of dew
Tossed from the fairy freighter,—
  The wonderful, white canoe.

Thus, does the guardian watching,
  Faithfully vigil keep:
Hovering ever near
  His beautiful isles asleep.

A RAINY NIGHT

Dripping, dripping, ever dripping,
While the daylight dim is slipping
        Fast away,
Mist, on all the landscape lying,
Up, above, the storm-clouds flying
        Chill and gray.

Clouds now tossed, and torn, and riven, —
By the gusty breezes driven
        Swiftly on,
Out of range of mortal seeing,
Never pausing, ever fleeing
        Towards the dawn.

Raining, raining, ever raining:
Darkness on the daylight gaining
        Swift enshrouds,
All the winds of night are wailing,
For the moon her face is veiling
        In the clouds.

Hark! A sudden witch-like screaming,
And a baleful glimmer gleaming
        Thro' the night.
With a clang like Vulcan's hammer
Comes a train with clash and clamor
        Into sight.

Like pale stars in misty setting
Flash the rain-flecked windows fretting
Bars of light.
On, as if pursued, the vision
Speeds, with wild cries of derision,
And affright.

Slowly dies away the riot,
And an eerie soddened quiet
Falls around,
Broken by the fitful dashing
Of the heavy rain-drops, splashing
On the ground.

SPRING

Long, level stretches where the sullied snows
Lie heaped in drifts against the posts, and wires
That close about the fields, where blackened scars
Show where have crept the autumn's stubble fires.

On field and highway falls the sleet and rain,
In icy pools this churlish day of spring:
Poor spring, a-shake in winter's sodden rags;
Too cold to smile, too miserable to sing.

Oh, slowly wakening nymph! make haste and don
Thine own fair robes: with garlands deck thy hair,
Unloose the lakes, and streams, herb, tree, and flower,
All nature in thy largesse claims a share.

MIRACLES

For those who seeing, see, each day is born
  A miracle of joy when night is done,
A miracle as great as though each morn
  An angel heralded the rising sun.

Fair miracles of dawn and sunset gold,
  Strange miracles of which the world is rife.
Sweet miracles of bud and roseleaf fold—
  Stern miracles of birth, and death, and life.

A DAY IN SPRING

After these dizzy, shrieking winds,
  Oh, sunny perfect day.
We welcome thee with lightened hearts,
  The children at their play
Are wild with joy to be released
  Once more from cramping walls.
The blackbirds laugh in scattered flocks,
  The saucy robin calls.
Amid the faded, frost-worn leaves
  Of last year's withered grass,
Fresh, tender sprouts are peeping up
  To greet me as I pass.
And short-stalked, blue anemones
  Lift bravely to the sun
Their dauntless heads, in downy hoods
  By Frost and Phœbus spun.

THE INDIAN CHIEF'S FAREWELL

"Oh, Strong-heart! wake, it is dawn.
  Remember the parting place.
Oh, Brave-heart, hasten and come.
  Once more let me see thy face.

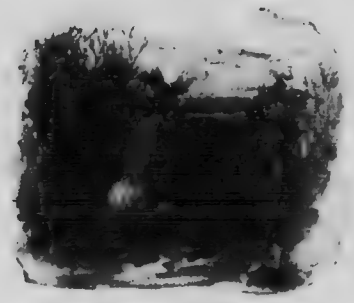
My Braves are waiting and fierce:
  War-bonneted warriors they,
Hot for the clash and din,
  The thunder, and smoke of the fray.

My ponies are ready and fleet,
  Like hawks they sweep the plain.
Brave-heart, oh, pray to the gods,
  We all reach home again.

For the Pale face Braves shoot straight
  At the Redskin's naked breast,
And he who rides to the fight
  For many moons may rest.

Kaween! I call to our gods!
  "Oh, Manito! Manito! Hear!
Weaken the sun-haired chiefs
  For they know nor flight nor fear."

Oh, Strong-heart, peering far
  When the War-whoops die away, —
Oh, soft eyed soul of me
  I will ride by night and day.



Till I see thy tent-poles gleam
  Against an evening sky, —
Oh, Strong-heart I will come —
  Will come if but to die."

THE LOYALIST

Song

A nation we, but newly framed
  From the nations of the earth,
Yet loyally true to the brave, old flag
  That guards the land of our birth.
Yes, loyal and true, are we of the East, —
  And we of the golden West, —
We, who dwell on the motionless seas
  The years have rocked to rest.

Chorus.
Tho' we are not Britons from over the seas,
  Nor all have British sires,
Yet greater love for the British flag
  Lives not in the English shires.

We, of the farms and the swaying fields
  Of rippling, rustling grain, —
We, who live near the earth's full breast,
  And reap of the sun and rain;
We, who are wise in nature's ways,
  And who toil for a nation's weal,
Would fight till the last, red drop was spent
  And our hearts had ceased to feel.

We, of the ranch of a thousand kine,
  Who may look over leagues of land,
Straight to the gateway of earth and sky
  Unmarred by a human hand,
We, who are browned by the sun, and the
    wind, —
  And are fearless, frank, and free,
Will not be the last to offer arms
  When the summons sweeps o'er the sea.

We, of the mines who search for gold,
  And dig in the dim, dark drifts;
We, who rend from the naked rocks
  The richest of nature's gifts;
We, who are rugged, and rude, and rough,
  And shut from the open sky —
Would come at the call of Britain's need
  To stand by the flag or die.

CANADA

Land of the rill, and the river;
  Land of the sea and the plain;
Land where the breasts of the prairies
  Swell with their bounty of grain.
Land of the foothill, and mountain;
  Lake an' the wooded shore;
Youthful, o'errunning with laughter;
  Glad, with her hand on the door.

Welcoming kindred, and stranger,
  Thither-ward, Providence led:
Promising homes to the homeless;
  Feeding the hungry with bread.
Land where the malice of cities
  Dies, where the running winds blow;
Land where the hampered discover
  Room for their stunted to grow.

Land where the sorrowing exile
  Prays for a share of the sod
Free from the knout of oppression
  That scourges his worship of God.

We, who are children by birthright,
  Freely our heritage share
With the despoiled of the nations,
  Brought from the brink of despair.

Freely we share with our brothers,
  Plainland and river and wood,
Giving to them as God gave us
  Unstinting measure of good.
But we, who are children by birthright —
  Unspotted must keep her fame
Giving her sons by adoption
  The crown of an unstained name.

CHLOROFORM

As when a sufferer fast sinking down
  Into the yellow waves of chloroform,
At some chance rustle of the nurse's gown,
  Rises to consciousness above the storm,
And feels wild terror bite into his soul,
  Yet helpless lies, nor speaks, save for a moan,
Till once again the billows o'er him roll, —
  The thick, soft surges of the magic cone.

So we, who sail above quicksand and shoal,
  Lulled half asleep by many a siren tone,
At some chance jarring of our drifting barque
  Start wide awake, with terror of a strife
We hear, yet seeing not, know in the dark,
  The horror of the mystery of life.

SONNET

To the Spirit of Fire

Home-coming kindred, in thy captive light,
  Find comfort, love, remembrance; all the sweet,
Dear joys, that flutter wounded 'round the feet
  Of Time, in his ordained, relentless flight.
Fair is thy face, to him whose straining sight,
  Leaps from the churlish, cold, and empty street,
To see thy daring glance the darkness greet,
  In gay defiance of the inclement night.
But stay: The scarred and desolate mountain-side;
  The charnel'd pleasure house; the burning ships;
The blazing cities, and the acrid dust,
  Shriek to the heav'ns, how men, and things, have died
Before the kiss of thy unbridled lips;
  Th' insensate fury of thy raging lust.

LOVE'S PILGRIMAGE

Love walked with Joy, one day, —
  His winged feet scarce touched the radiant earth,
The air was all aglow with apple blooms,
  And from Love's lips there fell a glory song,
    The day he walked with Joy.

Love walked with Care, one day,
  And though the fragrant apple blooms were gone,
And not so bright the sunshine overhead —
  He walked with gentle mien, and on his lips
There played a tender smile, a happy light
  Shone in his azure eyes — a sweet content:
    The day Love walked with Care.

Love walked with Death, one day:
  And thorny was the path erstwhile so fair,
Adown his ashen cheek the bitter tears
  Rolled silently: Yet still, upon his face
There shone a look, as though, faint, far away
  Above the darkened clouds, he still could hear
The tender music of his glory song
    The day Love walked with Death.

Love walked with Self, one day:
  And lo! the way seemed long. Night folded up
The pathway from his sight, and on his ear
  There fell no echo of his glory song:
Then strait, as o'er him swept in hideous waves
  Self's pestilential breath, he shivered sore, —
Grew cold, and very still. And thus Love died.
    The day he walked with Self.

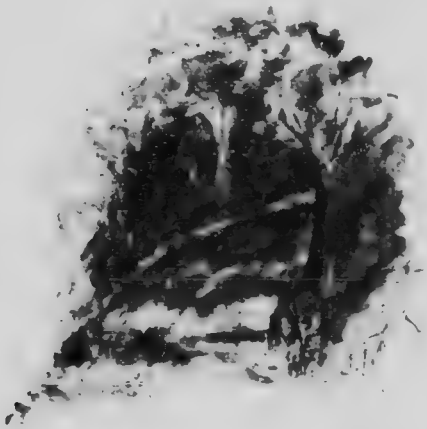
THE ROAD

There's a strip of dusty road, winding down,
    Soft and brown,
And I watch it from the window where I sit,
    It is bordered green with trees,
    Lightly ruffled by the breeze,
And the birds across its sun and shadow flit.

Its beginning know I not nor the end
    'Round the bend,
But its way-farers I watch from day to day:
    Each one carrying his load
    Up or down the dusty road,
Warmed with sun, and touched with shadow, on
        the way.

Though the burden-bearers plain are to me,
    Yet I see
Not the burdens, but I know that they are there,
    By the patient faces strained, —
    By the empty laughter feigned, —
By the sadness over all who hither fare.

And I wonder if the way-farers know
    As they go
Sadly onward, earning each his daily bread,
    That in spite of every ill,
    Life is worth the living still
While the birds sing in the sunlight overhead.



"HE CALLED ME BY MY NAME"

The children, sons, and daughters, grown,
  All call me: "Mother dear."
I'm "Grandma" to my husband,
  And the country far and near.
But when, to visit us, to-day
  A friend, long absent came, —
The tears welled up in my old eyes —
  He called me by my name!

"And are you Nellie? Nellie Dean!
  The sauciest girl in town,
I can recall like yesterday
  Your frills and muslin gown.
Oh, Nell, you were a case," he laughed
  With much pretence of blame.
And I? I smiled with quivering lips: —
  He called me by my name!

Seldom to me the old-time friends
  Come, knocking at my door,
And later friends tho' good and true,
  Are not like those of yore.
To them I am just, "Mrs. Smith"
  An ancient, proper dame,
Small wonder that my eyes were wet, —
  He called me by my name!

THE OUTER SEA

Gay are the ships on the river that leads to the
Outer Sea,
And the fluttering flags are lightly lifted aloft in
glee.
Sweet are the winds from the meadows, laden
with spoils of spring
Caught from the birds, and blossoms, kissed in
their wandering.
And glad are the folk a-sailing, careless, and
canker-free,
On the breast of the running river, that leads to
the Outer Sea.

But dark are the ships at twilight, hurrying out
to sea;
Silent, the sombre reaches, where the dreary
marshes be.
The roar of distant breakers ebbs, and swells
with the tide
Stirring the narrow river with thoughts of the
ocean, wide.
White, are the faces peering over the slender
rails,
And haunted eyes are asking whither the convoy
sails.
For Faith is pluming her pinions and Hope is
winging afar
And where? oh, where? is the Pilot to guide them
over the bar!
As a flame is swept to darkness by the moaning
wind's decree
The questioning folk, unguided, are swept to the
Outer Sea.

TRUTH

Aye, what is truth? The phantom that we fondly clasp to-day
As Truth, (the fruitage of a host of yesterday's of toil)
The morrow's steadier light dispels, till not a trace remains.

Once more we sorrow for defeat with useless, scalding tears;
Once more is thrust away the falsehood we have loved as true;
Once more begins our patient quest for the elusive thing.

Absolute Truth! Oh snow white maiden with the flying feet —
Vouchsafe but once, to meet us face to face, that we may have
Thine image graven on our hearts and know the false from true.

THE ROSE OF DAWN

To J. W. B. P.

Athwart the night of early, sullen gloom,
  That arched the olden world, from rim to rim;
The stern, old prophets with their screeds of doom,
  Thro' arid spaces shed their starlight dim.
On lonely mountain-tops, where first the Rose
  Of Hope fulfilled, might bourgeon unto bloom,
The steadfast seers hurled forth the bitter woes
  That largely writ, still o'er the ages loom.
The years then rolling up their gathered store,—
  The sable night to twilight slowly grew
For lo! the light of priest and prophet lore
  A gentle radiance on the darkness threw;
But when her Babe, the gentle Mother clasped,
  The Rose of Dawn, All glorious, bloomed at last.

AUTUMN

The skies are dark; grey clouds hang low, unsmiling;
The woodland harp is hushed and flown the strummer,
The skies are dark, and flowers have no beguiling
While alien winds blow past the doors of summer.

So wailed my heart, but in the grey, cold gloaming
The dancing firelight snapped, and shouted: "Treason."
As to its radiance came the children homing,
And with them brought love's deathless, summer season.

THE ORCHESTRA

Across the ample overhead,
  Sure-footed, thro' the blue:
The shining worlds in splendor, dance
  Their stately measures through.
Their great Conductor, He, who leads
  In perfect tune, and time
The cohorts of the circling spheres
  In harmony sublime.

And where, the farthest-faring sun
  Lights up the faintest star,
Majestic chords, and symphonies,
  Roll o'er the vasts afar:
To lead, perchance, some wanderer home
  With every, haunting strain,
When death's, sweet flute, insistent, calls
  To mystery again.

Or, are the vibrant harmonies
  There chaunted o'er and o'er,
That echoing thro' the lighted worlds
  Stray sometimes to our door?
And for a blissful moment, hold
  Us raptured; and are gone.
What time, the twilight hushes fall,
  Or glory thrills the dawn.

THE DYING CHILD

Frail, little one! whose upturned, glazing eyes
  Have scarcely seen this world of cark and care,
Hast thou some prescience of the doom that lies
  On all earth's children? Dost thou dread thy share
Of helpless misery? Sweet, shaken flower,
  Thou art spared much of woe. Once more assume
Thy place in fields of asphodel, this hour
  Of transient pain, will bring eternal bloom.

THE KING

Song

The king rides by in pomp and state
  Amid the trumpet's blare:
His burnished trappings gleam like gold —
  Like gold his yellow hair.
A royal maid he rides to wed, —
  And fair, the people say,
Whose haughty brow will grace the crown
  He places there, to-day.
The maid he loves, he may not wed,
  She, from her lattice high,
All rose-embowered, waits to see
  The cavalcade go by.
The king looks up, and drawing rein
  Cries, with a merry air:
"Sweet cousin, throw the rose, I pray,
  That nestles in your hair."

The maiden smiles; her smile, I ween,
  Is sadder far than tears;
As swiftly downward floats the rose,
  And all the concourse, cheers.
They may not know her broken heart:
  "'Tis a winsome maid" they cry.
But ah! the rose, breathes to the king:
  "Goodbye, goodbye, goodbye."

MY LOST YOUTH

Oh, my lost youth! to what far bourne
  Of time, and evil chance,
Have drifted your potential days
  Through life's strange circumstance.

What dreams we dreamed; what visions fair
  Flashed in the sunset sky;
What heights we scaled; what perils braved;
  My fair lost youth and I.

New heavens and earth unrolled each morn
  Before our raptured gaze;
And miracles, expectant, wrought
  Exacted no amaze.

Strange, unfamiliar, other self;
  Pale as the moonlight's glow,
Now scarce remembered, save in dreams
  Of that long time ago.

But when the wind sweeps moaningly
  O'er tree-tops bare and brown,
Tossing against the darkening sky
  After the sun goes down.

In that fey time, at eventide
  Defenceless then I see
The shadows part, and my lost youth
  Come back, accusing me.

OLD SONGS

I spent the morning rummaging,
  Shrouded in dusty gloom,
Amidst the household's broken gods
  Stored in a garret room.

And 'mongst the family driftwood
  Tossed on its quiet shore,
I found an ancient music book
  Filled with the songs of yore.

The dear old songs, we knew so well
  Some twenty years ago:
Sweet simple melodies, but some
  "Quite difficult you know."

"I Fear no Foe." Right valiantly
  I've heard the challenge flung
By rumbling basses, in the days
  When they and I were young.

We thought them very good indeed,
  And encored every strain.
I'd give the world I think, to hear
  Them troll it forth again.

"The Danube River," "Sing Sweet Bird,"
  Were always counted mine:
With: "Far Away," and "Cleansing Fires,"
  I used to sing them fine.

And many a time I've helped to hale
  The "Gipsy Countess," out,
And also bid the "Larboard Watch,"
  Ahoy his way about.

We knew no Liza Lehmann then
  Nor Persian glades at all:
The nearest that we ever came
  Was "Over the Garden Wall."

Ah, well-a-day. 'Twere well to be
  As canker free once more:
And young enough to like to sing:
  "The dear old songs of yore."

"THE JOURNEY IS LONG"

(Refrain from a song)

Hearest, oh, Father the penitent's cry?
  "Ah me, the journey is long,"
And sharp are the thorns of the pitiless way,
And dark the clouds hang, cold and grey:
  "Ah me, the journey is long, so long.
  Ah me, the journey is long."

Seest, oh, Father, our tears as they fall?
  The grief, the sorrow, the pain?
Do Thine eyes ever pity our griefs at all?
Ah, yes, Thou hearest us when we call:
  And none of the sorrow we suffer is vain:
  Not one of our sorrows is vain.

But oh! the journey is long — so long,
  And the years stretch out so far:
Though joy may come with the morning-tide, —

Still waits the night so dark, and wide
  Ere dawns the morning star,
  Oh, Father, make us strong
For still the night waits dark and wide
  "And, oh, the journey is long."

THE OLD FRIEND SPEAKS

"Nay, Nay, but sorrow's turned thy head,
  Art thou alone, dost think?
Hast never woman's bonds before
  Galled deep at every link?
Art thou the only woman born
  The gods grind in the mill?
Nay, Nay, sweetheart, I do not mock;
  Weep, an' ye must your fill.

There, there, 'tis hard to hush the sobs, —
  And harder still to weep
A husband's faithlessness; yet know,
  Thine own faith thou must keep.
"He forfeits all, — His claim is gone,"
  Tut, Tut, 'tis but the smart
Of pain past bearing, breeds such words;
  You vowed "Till death do part."

And that means all of good, or ill,
  And honor lost — or won;
His ill 's your ill; his weal 's your weal. —
  His son, is still your son.
Break not the marriage pact, dear heart,
  For broken all is vain.
And well or ill, the burden's ours,
  The burden, and the pain.

My dear, I have grown old and gray,
  And wiser too, I trust
And I have seen the cruelty
  Of life, and love, and lust.
God knows, why women's hearts are made
  To break or bind at will;
God knows, why, filled with grief and shame,
  We shield the sinner still.

But hark ye, women who are true,
  Must truer be for all
The false, and falser sisterhood,
  Who cry: "Unfaith," and fall.
Thy life is not thine own, nor his
  Who holds it still in fee,
But pledged to honor, truth, and faith
  By those about thy knee.

Honor, and truth, and faith, and love,
  Are flowers of hardy growth;
Thy man has failed? Lift up thy head.
  Keep thou the faith for both.
A man may fall and, win again
  The place of his desert
But when a woman falls, ah me!
  No balm, can heal her hurt.

Go home, my bairn, indeed 'tis well;
  Drink of the cup thy fill;
Keep faith with faithlessness, and hold
  Thy woman's kingdom still.
In that high realm, pure and serene
  As heaven's bluest dome,
She dwells, whose steady hands uphold
  The guidon of the Home.

THE WIDOW

"My heart is breaking, — breaking! —
  You cannot come to me;
But where you are my dearest,
  There will I surely be.

The cup I drink is brimming
  With wormwood, and with gall,
And life, and love, are hidden
  By a ghastly, velvet pall.

From wall, to wall of my chamber,
  I have worn the carpet through,
Treading with tired footsteps
  The path that leads to you.

All night, with my burning eyeballs
  Bared to the silent dark,
I sob, and wish I were lying
  Beside you stiff, and stark.

Your chair is kept in its corner;
  And your books where you laid them down;
Your hat and stick where you left them
  That day when you came from town.

And your old, grey coat, my darling,
  Is my haven, when I cry,
And I kiss, and kiss its empty sleeves,
  And pray that I may die.

BELEAGUERED

Stretch out thine hand, beloved, and lo, behold.
  The unknowable is touched, and rippling far
In ever widening circles, fold on fold
  The ripples thou hast stirred, may reach a star.

No lightest thought, no simplest, spoken word,
  But steals its way thro' life's eternal change,
Diffusing influence unseen, unheard,
  And never ceasing in its subtle range.

At every hour, of every passing day,
  These wingéd creatures that the mind sets free,
Peer at us on their hurried onward way
  Of bright impulse, or dark malignancy.

At Birth and Death eternity serene
  Smiles on the morning, and the twilight sea;
Speeding the traveller from, what has been,
  To that far continent, the yet to be.

And there, 'twixt birth and death we are beset
  By influences grey and old as time:
With but a frail: "I will," as amulet
  Against the hosts that fight or foster crime.

ASSURANCE

I love thee, dear,
Whether the way be short or long:
Whether the days be dark or bright:
Whether your heart prove true and strong —
Whether the times shall prove your might:
I love thee.

I love thee, dear,
Whether you fail or win, 'tis one:
Whether success shall crown your days:
Whether you hold till the race is run:
Whether you lose or wear the bays.
I love thee.

I love thee, dear,
Absent or near, to-day, or when
The silver strands begin to break,
And sleeping back to God again
You rest until his word shall wake.
I love thee, dear.

THE RAIN

The day is dreary, dreary,
And the skies rain heavy tears,
And hearts seem all a-weary
Of life's aching hopes and fears.

But the earth grows brighter, brighter,
When the falling rain she hears
So perhaps our souls grow whiter
When washed by many tears.

SOUR GRAPES

For years I've striven to possess
  In all its witching prime;
The peachy bloom that flouts the years,
  And makes a sport of Time.

And I have oft at beauty's shrine,
  — A hapless devotee,
Poured fruitless powders, balms, and creams
  In thick libations free.

Now, were it given to me to choose
  Of life another term;
No milk and roses boon I'd crave;
  I'd be a *pachyderm!*

THANKFULNESS

Hold your ear close to the earth, sad soul,
  Hurt in the world's hard ways,
There is never a balm to make you whole
  Like hearing her psalms of praise,
Hold your ear close to her pitying breast;
  Hark, to the mighty throbs
Of nature's heart which finds no peace
  Because of her children's sobs.

Mother, and friend is she to all;
  Wiping away our tears;
With her sympathy easing every pain;
  Calming our childish fears.
Is it not so? Have you never felt
  The hills rejoice with you,
When the ice at your heart began to melt
  In some June-dusk's falling dew?

Have not the tree-tops clapped their hands
  Because you were glad at heart?
Nor the laden flowerets flung for you
  Their dainty leaves apart?
So that their fragrance might bring your hurts
  Balm from the long ago,
Ere the vulture, sorrow's, savage beak
  Had torn your heart strings so.

Have you not felt when an aching grief
  Enveloped you like a pall,
That the sobbing wind, and rain-drenched leaf
  Were whispering: "We know all?"
Hold your face close to the grass and moss,
  When blistered and scarred with tears
For the awful, desolate sense of loss
  That grows with the passing years.

Hold your ear close when anguish rends
  Your life in her tigress leap;
When her cruel claws draw blood-red rain
  From your heart's most holy deep.
Birds of the forest hush their songs;
  The wild things at their play,
Will pause, sad-eyed, at the mystic woes
  They may not chase away.

Listen, then, friend of the sad, sad heart,
  In solitude make thy moan;
Take thy grief from the world apart,
  And hark, to the undertone
Of praise, and recurrent joyfulness,
  The earth is sending up
To the Maker of all her loveliness,
  Praise for her brimming cup.

For dimmed tho' the eyes of nature are
  With tears for thy darkened word,
Her heart is ever, a chalice, filled
  With thankfulness to the Lord.
Then hold your ear close to the earth, sad soul,
  Hurt in the world's hard ways;
There is never a balm to make you whole
  Like hearing her psalms of praise.

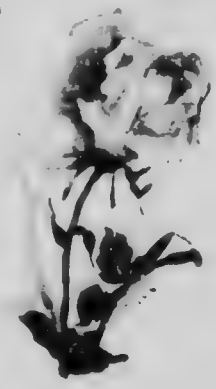
ROSE IN THE GARDEN

Song

Oh, Rose in the garden, so sweet, so sweet,
  What stirred you so, to-day?
When gathered in her finger-tips
She kissed your scented, ruddy lips,
  I pray you, rose, to say.

Oh, Rose in the garden, so sweet, so sweet,
  When laid upon her breast,
I saw the tear-drops softly start
From out your crimson, velvet heart,
  To be so richly blest.

Oh, Rose in the garden, so sweet, so sweet,
  Will time with his magic loom,
Weave in her heart a home for me?
And on her cheeks, where lilies be,
  Will my love-roses bloom?



THE ENGINEER

He lived; and with a mighty brain
  Wrought miracles in steel and stone,
Across great chasms bridged a way
  And tamed the floods, alone.

His miracles brought wealth, and fame,
  To many a waiting door,
And life drew inspiration from
  His wonder-working lore.

He died; Grown very 'd and frail,
  His dauntless bann . furled.
He died, alone, unwept, unmourned,
  Forgotten by the world.

BEFORE THE OPERATION

The Nervous Patient's View

"Across my narrow bed, so white and prim,
  A little sunbeam falls athwart the gloom,
And thro' its golden woof, the dancing motes
  Makes holiday within my darkened room.

I never thought to break down at the last
  And feel the dread, and terror, hourly grow;
I set my teeth to keep their chattering still,
  And clench the hands that shake and tremble so.

The nurse has made me ready, and has gone
  A moment, ere the doctors come to me, —
And I am frightened, oh, so frightened, I
  Can only lie and suffer tremblingly.

I'll ask them if I cannot wait a day,
  If not a day, perhaps an hour's reprieve;
Tomorrow, oh, tomorrow, I could bear
  To have it done tomorrow, I believe.

Tomorrow? I may be so cold, so cold;
  'Tis best to turn from that; — I must keep sane
I'll think of all the dear ones, safe at home,
  Waiting for mother to come back again.

Oh, Baby, Baby, Baby! Shall I see
  Ever again your sunny little head?
I hear them coming — Oh, my God, they're here: —
  The fear of death encompasseth my bed.

The cone is on my face. Slow, drop by drop —
The — pain — destroyer — falls —" A silence deep,
Slides gently down. A watch ticks somewhere near;
A gasp — a struggle; — then most blessed sleep.

SONNET

To the Moon

Great Lady of the silent, summer night!
Pacing with stately tread thy palace floor,
Serenely luring with thy silver light
Thy baffled lover to his barriered shore.
Hopelessly desolate, from tide to tide,
He yet obeys the mandate in thine eyes,
Thy mirrored beauty still his only pride.
As deep within his heart thine image lies,
Like his, my love in heaven is set so far
I may not touch her shining garment's hem,
But ever look and long as for a star
That nightly dons its regal diadem.
Like him, I serve a lady thronéd high,
Nor guerdon ask, but service, till I die.

THE ROSARY

Dear past come back, fair pearls, and golden beads,
Dropt from my swinging rosary of days;
I would recall the words — undo the deeds
That mar your beauty for the Master's gaze.

"LOVE ME, SWEET"

Love me, sweet, I love thee, —
  This alone I plead,
Only that I love thee
  But 'tis love indeed.

Love me, sweet, the days are
  Dead and dark and cold,
When thy voice I hear not
  Nor thy face behold.

Love me, sweet, my arms fall
  Empty, wanting thee.
Love me, sweet, I love thee
  For eternity.

Love me, sweet, Life never
  May its dreams fulfill
If thy presence bless me
  Not thro' good and ill.

Love me, sweet, Life lacketh
  Reason, savor, zest,
If it find not haven
  In thy gentle breast.

Yea, Sweetheart, I love thee
  As men thought to love,
When the race was nearer
  To its God above.

Ere men played with honor
  In the world's foul mart,
And for place or substance
  Sold a woman's heart.

I have naught to give thee
  But Love's gracious wealth:
Youth and hands unfettered,
  And unmortgaged health.

Yet is this a slight thing
  At thy feet to pour?
Heights and depths of loving;—
  Could a king give more?

Could he giving amply
  Palaces and pearls,—
Or a crown bestowing
  On thy sunny curls,

Give more than the treasure
  That I offer thee?
Love, and love, and love, dear,
  Through eternity?

Sweetheart, I can only
  Kiss thy garment's hem,
But my love can crown thee
  As a diadem.

Love me, sweet, my empty
  Life, my arms, my heart
Call thee, claim thee, hold thee
  Until death do part.

BEREAVED

I watched thee so, my baby, —
  I happed thee safe and warm,
And now upon thy little head
  Descends the winter storm.

The soughing of the night wind, —
  Each shriek and howl, and moan,
With anguish fill my sickened soul,
  For thee in the dark alone.

My heart was thine, my baby,
  My heart now bare, and sere,
And oh, my eyes are aching so
  For the blessing of a tear.

My little helpless bairnie!
  Your dark head on my breast
Would still this tireless yearning,
  And teach me how to rest.

My grief would pierce thy silence,
  My love would warm thee, sweet,
Could I but hold thy small pale hands
  And kiss thy dear, dead feet.

SONG

Dance little wavelet, dance, heed not of sorrow,—
Sparkle at every glance, rain comes tomorrow,—
  Dance little wavelet, dance.

Shine little sunbeam, shine, hearts are a-breaking;
Pour out your golden wine to heal the aching,—
  Shine little sunbeam, shine.

Laugh little children, laugh, for time is gaining,
Age looms up with a staff,—no longer feigning,—
  Laugh little children, laugh.

Sing little birdling, sing, so much of sighing
Darkens the greater spring, nor helps the dying,—
  Sing little birdling, sing.

THE CHILDREN'S PICNIC

The tumbled water gamboled
  In and out, along the shore,
And with a madcap wind played tag
  As happy as you please,
We had the nicest, jolliest time
  We ever had before,
The day we danced, and romped, and played,
  Beneath the forest trees.

KNIGHTED

Oh Life's sweet music! — song of songs.
  Oh melody sublime.
With rhythmic beat of night and day
  To mark the changing time.

What though my foe in ambush hid
  May lurk along the way.
What though defeat and failure grim
  May claim the close of day.

The joy of life no ill can dim
  Nor battle make afraid,
When on the chosen knight Love lays
  His shining accolade.

INCENSE

Bud of the garden, — bloom of the soul, —
  Leaf of the wayside tree, —
Singing of birds on a grassy knoll;
  Sheen of the summer sea.

Sweetness of laughter; sorrow of death, —
  Rain on the upturned sod;
Scent of a dewy nursling's breath
  Newly come from God.

Strength of the striving; deeds of the blest, —
  Light through the darkness hurled;
Beauty arrayed for a dreamless rest;
  Youth of a bounding world.

These, are caught by the acolyte —
  Stars on the purple wall,
Swinging their censors golden-bright
  Low to the Lord of all.

SLEEPLESSNESS

Through the palace of night awake, awake.
  What weary hours we keep,
We who wait for the dawn to break, —
  The sleepers who cannot sleep.

We who search from zone to zone
  For the airy vision fled,
In a flash of thought thro' the world alone, —
  The quick among the dead.

In the misty halls with a zeal unmatched
  For our precious dreams we pray,
But the gates of sleep are all unlatched
  And the dreams have run away.

But flowers of thought in radiant dress
  Spring from the sombre bowers;
Till we scarce know whether to curse or bless
  The blossoming, midnight hours.

And jewels of fancy flash and flare
  In the mind's sore-troubled deep,
But the cry over all is a bitter pray'r
  For the blessing of sleep, sweet sleep.

The Spirit of the North

DEDICATED TO MY MOTHER

Downward, and ever downward, under the ice and snow;
Downward where the treach'rous, evil Messengers go:—

Loki, the Northern Spirit, stretches himself and sleeps,
Save when the Southland laughter into his dungeon creeps.

Into his ear this laughter stealing so gladly gay,
Wakens the vengeful sleeper to fear of the far off Day.

Thundering forth he comes, a god of the olden time —
Calling for, "Hela, Hela!" daughter of Niffelheim.

Hela, the awful goddess, who reigns in the Hall of Grief,
Low at the root of the Ash Tree, where never a dewy leaf

Falls from the high, green branches, swarming with golden bees,
And watched by the Beautiful Three who water the sacred trees.

Never a note from Heimdal's wonderful song of Fate
Floats from the Rainbow Bridge up-springing to heaven's gate.

There all is joy and laughter; here all is grief and woe;
Here in the House of Hela — House of the ice and snow.

"Hela! oh, Hela!" thunders the Spirit of the North:
"Open the gates — the Helgrind — and let me once more forth;

"Help me to hush the laughter maddening all my brain,
The senseless, tinkling laughter made by the dancing rain.

"Curses on him of Alfheim! riding his golden boar —
Garmented as the sun and watched by his Dwarflings four —

"Curses on him forever! Frost and the bitter night! —
Gods! I will rend his kingdom and cover his lands with blight!"

Swiftly the Northern Spirit hurried, a shape of dread,
Shaking the giant walls of Grief with his mighty tread.

Up, he rushed from the darkness — up, to the earth once more —
Up, where the smiling summer brooded o'er sea and shore.

Far and away the Southland thrilled with the murm'ring pines,
Slowly the golden sunshine purpled the fruited vines.

Dark grew the brow of Loki; and as his bitter breath
Drifted across the meadows, still grew the land in death.

"Hela, oh, Hela, Hela!" the mocking Spirit cried;
"Speak! Have the sons of Alfheim a corner where to hide?

"Where are his dancing sunbeams — valleys and lakes outspread?
Hela!" he cried, and, "Hela!" Lo, they are cold and dead!

"Never more will their laughter madden my aching brain —
Never more will the blossoms bow to the dancing rain."

Sadly the Prince of Alfheim, smiled in his foe-man's face,
Bravely he held his head though slowlier grew his pace —

"I go for a time," he said, and fair were his eyes and clear —
But I will come again, and gladly my sons will hear.

"Think ye to kill my people? — not dead but sleeping, they
Await my springtime coming, as the sufferer waits the day.

"My Boar of the golden bristles! again will ye bring me here,
But now must ye carry me hence for the sleeping night of the year.

"Loki, the war between us lasts till the Winters Three,
And yet again Three more and the ending of all shall be; —

"Lasts till the purple dusk of the Gods shall surely come, —
The ramparts of Asgard fall, and Heimdal's voice be dumb.

"Ever the war is raged till the Rainbow Bridge goes down;
Yea, and the sons of Valhalla perish with Odin's crown.

"Loki, the end is near when double the Winters Three
Call for the Fenris-wolf — then perish the Gods — and We."

HEIMWEH

My strife with the world is over, and here I needs must lie
And sigh my final sighing beneath an alien sky.

For years o'er the portly ledgers, in a stifling city street,
I ruled as a king of commerce, but rule is bitter-sweet!

None dare disobey the master: — the name with men means fear! —
I am sick of such slavish service this many a weary year.

My tender and loving lost ones, who made strife worth the while,
Reply not when I call them by word, or look, or smile.

What boots all the gold and silver when love and loved are dead —
When hands of the hired tend us, nor heed the aching head.

What boots all the gold and silver when life is a yearning cry
For the plains — the open prairies under the brooding sky.

My birth claims a far-off Northland — she calls me — calls me home
To rest on her quiet bosom 'neath God's cathedral dome.

I long with a homesick longing to feel the buffalo grass, —
To hear the honking wild-geese and white cranes Northward pass.

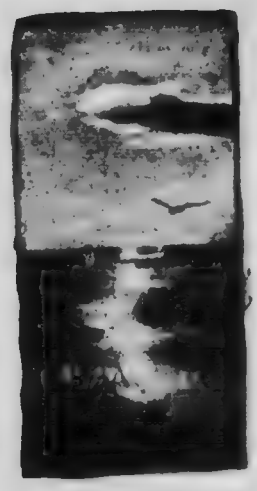
To see the reedy marshes, rank with the rains of June,
Shelter the nesting wild-duck beneath a summer moon.

When shadowy mists of morning are ghosts all drawn and pale
Of blanketed Indian women who have lost the travois trail.

Will never I see uprising like a slender stalk of pray'r
The smoke of the ruddy camp-fire in the chill October air? —

Nor witness the Indian Summer linger on plain and lea
To kiss in his snowy cradle, the Winter at her knee —

Nor see with his sheets of silver spread to the earth and sky
The frostily blue cloud-shadows over its surface fly.



What time the bending cat-tails with pendant diamonds glow,
And cheeks of the scarlet rose-hips are blushing thro' the snow,

When bravely the chirping snow-bird chants
from some tilting spray
Of gaudily stemmed red willow fringing the
frozen way.

And slowly with noiseless footsteps the lovely
jewelled nights
Come with their trains of dancers flashing the
Northern lights!

Oh, beautiful Northern twilight! and the blue,
blue Northern sky
That hangs like a giant harebell held by the
Hand on high!

The city is pressing 'round me — I cannot get
my breath, —
No air — no sky — no stillness, but clamors
worse than death! —

Oh, for the noble silence pulsing the great, blue
bell!
When rosy the dawn is glowing as the heart of an
ocean shell!

One glimpse of the red-drenched splendor of
chaliced clouds that sail
Close to the dying sun-god, like cups of the Holy
Grail!

They say I'm sick unto death;—then for Christ's
sake take me home, —
Home to the quiet seas that never break in foam.

Oh, God! I am old and broken — and the pain
is the pain of hell —
The mystical North is calling — no power can
make me well, —

But I am her child, she would hold me cradled
against her breast —
Lulled to a dim forgetting — hushed to a dream-
less rest.

THE FALLING STAR

A star looked down from his home in space
Deep in a glassy pool;
And saw, with wonder, his own sweet face
Framed in the waters cool!

Enthralled he gazed at the image true,
Winking its curious eye,
Till — leaning too far for a better view —
He tumbled out of the sky!

HARD TIMES

"Come in, — come in, it's blowin', sir, a perfec' gale to-night.
Hang up yer coat there by the door, — come to the fire, — that's right!
Things is kinder mussy-like, — ain't got much furn'cher yet —
But still the shanty's shelter from the wind, an' snow an' wet.

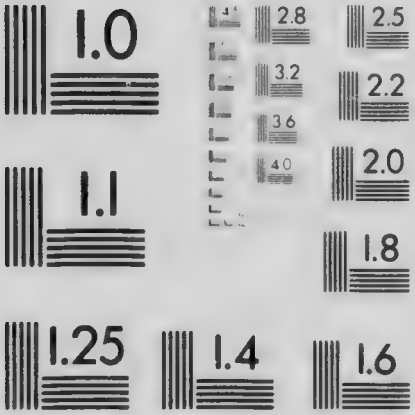
"Yes, times is hard; I reckon that there won't be much to show
Fer last year's work upon the claim, — the price of wheat's so low;
An' wife's bin sick a long, long time, — she took the grip real bad —
Got kinder tuckered out a-workin' morn an' noon like mad.

"I've jis' bin fer the doctor, — that's him who went up stairs, —
He didn't speak of pay at all, or ask about my 'fairs, —
But if he had, the Lord alone knows what I should 'a done;
There's many here in want of cash — but us! *We ain't got none!*

"We can't afford to hire help, that's how things as they be, —
There's no one here to do the chores, but Sue an' Babe an' me.
An' Babe, — she'd like to do her share, — bein' most a whole year old!

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No 2



APPLIED IMAGE Inc

An' knowin'! — Gosh! that child knows more'n
many a man could hold!

"Yet I must say she ain't a *whale* at helpin' on
the game, —
Though, lawzy-sakes! — she thinks she is, —
Lord love her jis' the same!
Sue's home was in Ontairy. — She'd never
worked real hard —
Not as she's had to work out here, in stable,
house and yard.

"A man scarce stan's this climate when he's poor-
ly clothed an' fed,
An' housed in shacks so cold, yer breath, goes
smokin' 'round yer head!
An', Gosh! I couldn't help it, — I'd haf to go to
town
A-teamin' loads of wood, er hay, fer Smith, er
Jones, er Brown —

"Try'n to arn a dollar p'rap's to keep the wolf
at bay,
An' git the things we needed, so, we've struggled
day by day.
Yes, while I'd be away she'd haf to look up all
the stock: —
An' chop the hole out at the crick — froze solid
like a rock.

She'd water all the cattle there, — Sue's jis' a
little thing —
Comes hardly to my shoulder, yit she'd laugh an'
jest an' sing,

An' sorter joke about her work, because it worried me!
I might 'a known how it would end; — fer now she's down, ye see.

I'm tur'ble glad the doctor's here, — an' that he come to-day;
Of course it's jis' a cold, but still — I'm anxious, I mus' say,
It seems so strange when Sue's not 'round, that worried like I feel, —
Ef times jis' wasn't *quite* so hard I'd rustle out a deal

An' git her down East to her folks. That would be a surprise!
But with these mortgages, — Gol Darn! — say, what would you advise?
Oh, doctor! How's yer patient seem? Guess I was off my head
To be so scared this mornin'. Doctor! — No! — my God! — she's dead!"

THE PRISON CHAPEL

Stony Mountain

Outside, the summer winds roam free—the soaring birds no boundaries own,
The June time fills each heart with glee, save these behind the bars alone.
The roving sunlight struggles thro' the bars of weather-beaten steel —
A gay old outlaw dancing while the prisoners decorously kneel.

The arméd guards watch ceaselessly in sentry box — by iron door
The ways that lead to liberty — each avenue and corridor.
The hush is gently stirred — a voice swells out in praise and pray'r and psalm,
The organ moans its sadness through the silence of the Sabbath-calm.

"The Lord is in His Temple here," so reads the solemn scroll above
The crimson altar-cloths, where lie the volumes of the law and love;
"Almighty Father we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep;"
The heart-break of the world breathes through the sad confession low and deep.

Shut from the world, condemned to live throughout the week with soundless lips,
The prison-voice with pain o'erflows when silence once her leash unslips.
The firm-voiced priest speaks reverently the great "Thou shalt nots," and with awe
Comes the response from convict lips: "Lord, teach our hearts to keep this law."

The sermon follows, tender, plain, as suited to the time, and need
Of future days of liberty, with freedom both for will and deed, —
A laying of foundation deep, — not leaving all to idle chance,
When once again the men go forth to fight with place and circumstance.

Oh, brothers! overcome by stress of stormy passions, — loves and hates;
When once more free, bind not yourselves, *with stronger chains, outside the gates.*

SILVER POPLARS

Morning

Gathered in friendly groups, like a bevy of graceful girls
Saucily shaking their tresses free from a bath of pearls;
Draperies daintily green, and 'broidered against the sky
With laceries lightly swept by shy winds loitering by.
Ghosts of the dawn for background, — spirits of rose and grey,
Painting the silver stems with a blush for the coming day.

Noon.

Now when the sun hurls down his arrows of light and fire,
Drowsily nod the trees awaiting the wind-god's lyre;
Then from their slumbers wakening they rustle and pat their gowns,
And gossip in wonderful whispers till night creeps o'er the downs.

Night

Lo! as the shadows lengthen, together the trees are pressed,
Fluttering like a dove-cote thrilled and sore distressed, —
Nervous hysterical tremblers! of what are ye not afraid?
Afraid of owl-wings flapping, afraid of the cloud-rack's shade?
Clinging together with fingers clutched and entwined I wis,
Shrinking with fear at the footstep — pale 'neath the south wind's kiss.
Ah! ye cannot remember my beautiful frightened trees
Shivering in the moonlight — shuddering in the breeze,
The long-forgotten sorrow that from topmost leaf to moss,
Still thrills thro' all your branches, the sorrow of — A CROSS.

A THUNDERSTORM ON THE PLAINS

At early eve, I sat outside my tent, and watched the changing pictures in the West
Grow quickly 'neath my gaze. Cities and towns, built up of golden clouds, faded and passed
Leaving no trace, like those fair cities of a bygone age, — Nineve and Babylon,
At intervals the opalescent glory of the sky was rent with living fire —
A flaming sword, whose cruel, angry thrust drew out the life-blood of the firmament.

Earthward, a silence vast held all the widespread
circle of the plain, whose creatures felt
A presage of the storm. A subtle frightened
hush pervaded all the atmosphere —
The fear of an impending doom. Thus, while I
waited, slowly all color perished; —
Dull leaden tints stole o'er the gold and crimson
world, — A smell of swiftly-coming rain
Grew on the sense; —A lightly running wind just
brushed my cheek, and into rippling waves
Sent all the perfumed grass. But now mine eye-
lids fell before a light, like unto that
Which shone around the stern-browed Pharisee,
when on his way to bind the Damascenes.
I staggered back into my flapping tent, while on
my deafened ears there fell a crash,
As though the bolt had split the heavens in twain,
and into chaos hurled the universe!

TWILIGHT

No cloud in sight to mar the golden vault,
Just faintly tinged with blue, that charméd
while
Between the setting of the summer sun
And coming of the starry rank and file.

Reclined at ease upon the hillside's breast; —
With hands enclasped beneath the tired
head —
And gaze turned upward to the throbbing sky,—
So moved perchance beneath an angel's tread?

Life thus is good. E'en though the still delight
Of grief surceased, be not unmixed with pain:

The minor chord serves only to enhance
  The beauty of the greater major strain.

From depths serene the velvet robe of night
  Slips downward from the Master-Maker's
    loom,
And earth's sad wayfarers, all travel-torn,
    Are softly folded in its gracious gloom.

For one short hour the scheming world is not; —
  The grind, — the toil, — the cursing and the
    glare
Slip from the mocking soul. And roses breathe
  Their perfume, like the essence of a prayer.

THE SILVER BIRCHES

Tall and straight, and golden girdled,
  With white lilies in her hand —
My beloved came to greet me
  Where the silver birches stand.

I was weary with long waiting, —
  Tides of sorrow o'er me swept,
While I watched beside the birches,
  Where of late my lady slept.

Not a blot was on her bosom, —
  All her being glorified; —
From the vista of the future
  Drew she downward to my side.

All the pain of all my vigils, —
  All the anguish of the past
Beat upon my tortured spirit,
  Face to face with her at last.

And I would have caught her to me, —
  Crushed her in a last embrace;
Kissed her hair, — her hands, — the lilies,
  Kissed to rose her pallid face.

But she paused with grave rebuking —
  Held my passion in arrest, —
Raised her lovely arms in silence, —
  Laid the lilies on my breast.

Then with measured, stately footsteps,
  Farther, and yet farther, drew
Toward the vista of the future, —
  Fringed with rosemary and rue.

In its yellow light resplendent, —
  Backward turned with smiling lips,
And as promise of a guerdon, —
  Beckoned with her finger-tips!

All the man's love surging o'er me,
  Sorrow-crowned, and sorrow-kept;
With her sad smile, passed forever, —
  Passed forever — and I slept.

"He but dreamed it," say the people;
  "He was crazed with lack of rest!"
Yea, perhaps, but when I wakened,
  There were lilies on my breast!

And thro' days of sun and shadow,
  Wait I here her last command —
Wait, and keep my silent vigil,
  Where the silver birches stand.

THE QUESTION

"Soul," I whispered: "Soul," I whispered:
"Do you hear the voices crying?
See the shapes of anguish moving?
Hear the moaning, and the sighing?
Soul," I whispered: "Soul," I whispered:
"Is this dying, is this dying?

"In the future, Soul," I whispered:
"See the mystery and ponder, —
Guess the secret of the doorway, —
Is it always dark, I wonder?
Soul," I whispered: "Soul," I whispered:
"Over yonder, — over yonder?

"Looking backward thro' the ages,
To the lamps so dimly burning, —
To the latest priest or prophet,
See I human faces turning, —
Soul," I whispered: "Soul," I whispered:
"Filled with yearning, — oh, such yearning!

"Soul," I whispered: "Soul," I whispered:
"When the veil is rent asunder, —
When the doorway wide is opened, —
Will there silence be, or thunder? —
Light or darkness? Soul," I whispered:
"How I wonder! How I wonder!"

TO E. R. Y.

With a Portrait of Tennyson

We give you greeting, sweetest friend,
On this glad morning of the day
We keep in memory of Him,
Whose gentle sway

Has blessed the centuries; and taught
That selflessness of purest mould
Can make of life, a worth — not coined
In yellow gold.

Your fair, full life, — a help to all
On whom its essence fine descends: —
Is such to us the latest come,
Of all your friends.

From each day's intercourse, a hope,
And wingéd aspiration rise,
Till thought mounts up to touch the stars
And range the skies!

We pray you, take this little gift: —
This gift of love, — the shadow-face
Of him who sang of noble lives
And deeds of grace.

And so, sweet friend, this Christmas morn
While gladsome folk about the town
Greet friends, we kiss your hands, and lay
Our tribute down.

THE DEATH OF THE DAY

Steadfastly on she moves, — straight to the west, —
The Imperial Day:
Whose burning cheek and tarnished golden robe
Speak of the fray.

Her gleaming hair in many a flaming tress
The horizon veils:
And o'er the mountain tops in crimson state,
Her mantle trails.

So, like a war-worn queen, victorious
Yet wearied sore, —
With battle-ribboned banners flying free
This one time more

She goes to meet her doom, — though nations fall
She will not fail
To keep her tryst, and learn what lies behind
The mystic veil.

A-blaze with Death's wild fire, a space, against
The heaven's own blue, —
She parts the Western curtains with her hands,
And passes through.

EXPRESSION

Souls of men lie chained, — imprisoned — and
their wealth is never uttered, —
Lofty yearnings, poems, pictures, hide behind
the windows shuttered;
All the doors are barred and bolted, and the keys
of every portal
God holds surely, nor entrusts them to the feeble,
falt'ring mortal.

But when comes a mighty spirit, rising from the
common dust; —
Crying with a voice insistent; then the Master,
ever just,
Hears the anguished note uprising, — knows the
genius yet to be,
Unto him the keys are given, and the prisoned
soul goes free.

MIDNIGHT

I look up to the vast infinitude of space,
And see the velvet, midnight sky, as if it were
The wrong side of the floor of heaven, in strange
device
Pierced by rainbow stars, — a lattice-work of
love,
Through which a radiant light from God's own
face, in show'rs
Of misty tenderness, streams down upon the
world.

TEACH ME WISDOM, MOTHER-NATURE

Teach me wisdom, Mother-Nature: —
Take me to thy breast,
And the heart which well-nigh breaketh
With its grief that acheth, acheth,
May perhaps find rest.

Teach me these things, Mother-Nature: —
Let me learn apart
Secrets e'en the birdling knoweth
Skimming where the water floweth; —
Music in his heart.

Teach me what the flowers are saying, —
Heavy, — dew-empearled.
As each perfumed head low-bendeth, -
Waiting till the sun ascendeth
O'er a sentient world.

Show me how the torch of Autumn
Lights the glowing fire, —
Till with colors, no man nameth,
All the savage hillside flameth
On its funeral pyre.

Tell me what the raindrops mutter
When the floods descend,
And the lightning's banner waveth
Over sleeping homes he craveth
Heaven's leave to rend.

What are all the forests chanting
In deep organ tones,
When the wind his baton swingeth,
And the thunder-bell low-ringeth
Stormy antiphones.

Teach me these things, Mother-Nature, —
Take me to thy breast,
And the heart which well-nigh breaketh,
With its grief that acheth, acheth,
May perhaps find rest.

AN IMPRESSION

A flash of carriage wheels, whirling over the urban miles;
A glimpse of velvet ease where an insolent outcast smiles.
With the cloak, — the gloves, — the gown, with the feet so daintily shod,
Goes a heart let loose from hell, and a face like the mother of God.

THE REVEILLE

Wake, my own! The lances of the sun,
Rosy-red, are marching up the sky.
Wake, my own! for love and light are one,
And doubt and darkness in their presence fly.

Wind and storm galloped o'er the sea
All night long, and I dreamed of thee, —
Dreamed of thee, and as I am thine
My beloved, my beloved, —
Dreamed I, thou wert mine.

What care I for the storm's wild glee!
What care I for the moaning sea!

Day has dawned and the skies are clear!
My beloved, my beloved, —
Waken, love is here!

Wake, my own! The herald of the dawn
All the air with sweetest musi. fills, —
Wake, my own! The sable night is gone,
And morning calls "Reveille," to the hills!

IN MEMORIAM

F. C. S. C.

He kept his soul unspotted and untarnished,
A radiant lily cup — a holy chalice;
Which when the Great King saw, He gently lifted
And placed securely in His royal palace.

BEYOND IS GOD

I would grow up to the full stature of a soul;
Majestic, calm and brave; and ever strive to gain
The shining heights where love serenely dwells
With altruistic faith, in palaces of light.
Yet, with humility enough to comprehend
The narrow limits set to man's intelligence —
And — spite of subtle reason — wise enough to cry:
"Beyond is God."

SONNET

The restless world, at this the century's end,
  Gazing askance at icon, sect, or creed,
Lacks everywhere the grand incentive of belief, —
  For lack of faith always aborts the deed.
Half-heartedly, men speak of nobler things
  Than those behind a counter, bought and sold;
Because we *feel* half-heartedly no ringing song
  Or stirring story, in our ears is told;
When aiming high the arrow lower flies,
  And greed of gold bids princes stand and wait, —
Oh, marching years! that come from out the great,
  Dim-shadowed halls of vast futurities;
We pray you loose our dollar woven bands,
  So we may serve you with unshackled hands.

ELAINE

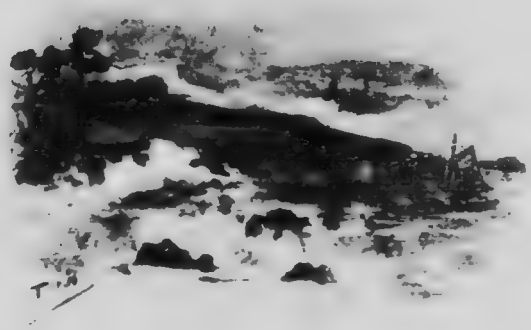
I hold my hands out to you, winds, wild winds,—
  Hurrying over the fields of grain, —
  Brushing the lawns where the lilies have lain,
  And implore you tread lightly, —
            Softly and lightly, —
The mosses that cover Elaine.

I hold my hands out to you, clouds, far clouds,—
  And pray, when you pour out your chalice of rain
  Over the valley, the hill and the plain,
  You will sprinkle but slightly, —
            Softly and lightly, —
The grasses that shelter Elaine.

I hold my hands out to you, earth, fair earth, —
  Who gatherest into thy bosom, the slain, —
  And keepest them safe in the wind and the rain.
  I pray you hold tightly, —
    Softly and lightly, —
The white narrow bed of Elaine.

I hold my hands out to you, sea, sad sea, —
  Singing forever the same refrain
  Of the dead who will never come home again, —
  And pray you sing nightly, —
    Softly and lightly, —
Your soft lullabies for Elaine.

I cry to you, clouds, and the winds, and the stars,
I cry to you, earth and the sea,
  To watch well and guard well
  The gate death has barred well
Till death himself ceaseth to be;
And when for me the long day has ended; —
Watch well, and guard well, the charge I have tended; —
Thro' the long centuries, earth, and oh, sea!
Watch till the day in a far 'ternity, —
God Himself giveth her back unto me. —
    Elaine! Elaine! Elaine!



ASPIRATION

It shines, at first, a distant wavering gleam,
  But faintly struggling through the misty night
Of sordid commonplace: Yet stirring up
  The soul to fresh endeavor towards the light.
Discouragement and doubt forever draw
  The cur ain of the present 'round our way —
But look beyond, the dawn will break, and still
  "Shine more and more unto the perfect day."

THE SINGER'S PRAYER

There is joy in the heart of the robin, —
  There is bliss in the throat of the lark. —
All the bird-songs of day are triumphant,
  And, — the nightingale sings in the dark!

But they all know the secret of singing,
  So that hearts lighter grow with their songs:
For their souls are so filled with life's music,
  There are no corners left for life's wrongs.

There's a boon I would ask of the Master —
  Lord, grant me the prayer that I pray!
Let me sing so the toilers may listen,
  As they pause in the work of the day. —

Let me sing so the tired at night-fall
  May behold in the jubilant West
All the glory of work, when the workman
  Has completed his task and may rest.

Let me sing so the sick and the suffering,
  Heavy-eyed with the vigils they keep,

Still may list to my lullabies stealing
  Softly in at their windows — and sleep.

Let me sing for my own time, and people, —
  For the children we meet on the way;
Let my voice find its chord in the present, —
  In the needs that are pressing to-day.

Many nations unborn have their singers
  Enwrapped in the nebulous mist
Of virginal days which the sunlight
  Has yet, nor discovered, nor kist.

They will sing for the time that is coming, —
  Let me sing for the time that is here;
Has the world of to-day less of heart-break
  Than the world of some far-forming year?

Fill my songs full of beauty and gladness, —
  Master, grant me the prayer that I pray.
Fill my songs full of hope for the hopeless, —
  And oh! let me sing them to-day.

UNCLE'S CHRISTMAS STORY

"You want a story, chickens mine, — a tale that must be true!
A tale of little children, — with a Christmas flavor, too?
My poor old brain will reel, I fear, attempting deeds like this:
You would not like to see, I'm sure, your Uncle crazy, Miss.
You doubt my word — you saucy scamps! Oh, well, oh, well, you'll see,

When, growling like a bear, I come, and eat you all for tea.
'Don't fool so much — be sensible!' Come now, I *do* like that:
If I've no sense in my old age, I'll eat my Sunday hat!

"I see there's no escape, so — in the good, old fashioned way:
Once on a time — far, far from here, and at a distant day,
I went — a missionary — to preach to flocks so sparse and thin
It took me weeks to gather half my congregation in.
My Sabbaths were expended, — nearly all the live-long day —
In driving to my stations with my span of ponies gray.
'Jehu, the son of Nimshi,' wasn't in it, — not at all.
When I my bronchos speeded, like a North-wind in the fall.

"A service short I held at ten — then off to Holland's Bluff
To meet a congregation there, of diamonds in the rough;
Then on, ten miles, and Evening Prayer refreshed the heart like dew, —
Sweethearts, a prairie preacher's lot has compensations too;
Then pastoral calls, at distant homes, filled up my busy week:
With here a word, — and there a pray'r, I tried to fitly speak.

I often think of that vast plain, whose circle made me feel
The centre of the universe, — the hub of all the wheel.

"One winter in my visiting (the story's coming now),
I reached a dreary, wind-swept hut, — a jolly 'Bow-wow-wow,'
Saluted me, from friendly throats, while tumbling through the snow
Two little tots came floundering, as fast as they could go,
But *firstly*, let me tell you, dears, the happy Christmas-tide
Was coming soon to glad with gifts, the children far and wide;
Alas, this little prairie home, — half-buried in the snow,
Was poverty's own haunt, — so drear and bare was it, you know!

"But, oh, how large the kindly hearts beneath that homestead roof, —
How sweet the gentle mother's voice, when raised in soft reproof, —
For e'en the best of little ones, a mother must subdue
When they upon the war-path go — a fearsome band of two!
I coaxed the doughty braves at last to sit upon my knee;
And as you stare to-night, you scamps, just so they stared at me!

For stranger-people in that land a luxury were deemed,
And like a Punch and Judy show, to them I doubtless seemed!

"I told them all about the elves and fairies I had known —
Of Giant-killers great and tall, — of Mother Hubbard's bone;
Of wond'rous Bean-stalks growing up — of Jack's so great and wise,
Who climbed those Bean-stalks in a night — right up into the skies!
I told them all the tales I knew, — and last the Bethlehem Star, —
And how the wond'ring shepherds heard the songs of heav'n afar:
But when their sleepy eyelids fell, beneath the dustman's arts,
We knelt — a humble roof-tree shelt'ring happy, peaceful hearts.

"Before the dawn I wakened, hearing voices in the night,
My little friends were talking fast, but hidden from my sight
Not far from where I rested; — raising cautiously, my head,
And drawing back the drapery, I saw the moonlight shed
A radiance like silver, over two small saints in white, —
Where, quaintly kneeling side by side, they prayed with all their might:
'Please, God, the preacher-man what comed, said you knew ever-thing,

And wanded all that's in the world, — so please, sir, won't you bring,
At Christmus-time, a drum fer Fred,— fer favver nice mince pies —
A chiny-set fer muvver — an' I'd like a doll what cries.
An' him what told us stories here, *an's sleepin' in our bed,*
Say, can't you help him, so's his hair *won't be so awful red,*
Amen.' 'Hold on a bit,' said Fred, 'I want to have a gun;'
The small maid said: 'I guess He knows; oh, Freddie, ain't it fun?'
They cuddled down, — the moonlight fair, baptized each golden head;
The 'preacher-man' he laughed, and groaned, because his hair was red.

"I think that's nearly all. Oh, did the children get their toys?
Dear me, how you do tease, — were ever seen such girls and boys?
I think perhaps they did, you know, for when I called once more
The babes came tumbling thro' the snow, just as they did before;
And I am sure Fred had a drum, and my sweet maid a doll,
A gift had come for everyone, — Santa remembered all.
And 'bout my hair, that funny thing? Yes, pets, now say 'good-night,'
God answered that in years of pain, by bleaching it snow-white."

THE TRUANT WIND

A baby wind went running wild about the fields
one day,
Capricious — full of glee he danced — a little
child at play.
But as day passed he wearied sore of running to
and fro, —
The smiling evening found him just too tired to
even *blow*.

FIRE-FLIES

Coming from darkness we pass to the dark —
Death that has been and a death yet to be.
Life flames between them — a luminous spark
Fanned by the wings of some far destiny.

Destiny, swift to enkindle the spark,
Blots it again in the blackness bef[illegible] —
We cry for a sound from the soun[illegible]ss — the
dark
Silence but deepens her stillnesses more.

Master of darkness, both future and past,
Lord of our days from the darknesses free;
Great God of silences, awful and vast,
Keep us from fearing our own mystery!

SUNSET

The sun on his way to his home in the west
A-down the long vault of the firmament springs
To love and his hearth, where the embers at rest
Will flash into flame at the beat of his wings.

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